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Correspondence.

SPIRIT FRESCO PAINTING.

D. B. S., Yerba Buena.—Spirit-fresco painting is particularly suited to wall surfaces. It is a modern invention by Gambier Parry, an English decorator, who claims for it durability, power to resist external damp and changes of temperature, luminous effect, a dead surface, and freedom from all chemical action on colors. Pictures painted by this method may be washed with soap and water. The surface to be painted on should be good common stucco, which is perfectly dry and porous. "The medium is composed of Elemi resin, pure white wax, oil of lavender, and the finest preparation of artist's copal; and with these, when incorporated by heat, must be mixed the colors in dry powder. If mixed on a slab, as for oil colors, and placed in tubes, they will last for years. The surface to be painted on is prepared with two washes of the medium diluted with one and a half its bulk of turpentine, and finally with two coats of a solution composed of equal quantities of pure white-lead and of gilders' whiting in the medium slightly diluted with turpentine. This, when dry, produces a perfect surface, and so white that colors upon it have all the internal light of Buon Fresco and the transparency of pure water colors." This is noticeable in Sir Frederick Leighton's mural painting "Arts of War," in the South Kensington Museum. If, in painting the work, any part, from having been left, becomes quite hard, that part can be softened with a wash of pure spike-oil, but a too frequent use of this is to be avoided. "The rationale of the painting," says Mr. Parry, "is this, that the colors in powder being incorporated with material identical with that which has already sunk deep into the pores of the wall surface, and has hardened by the evaporation of the turpentine vehicle may be regarded as belonging to the mass of the wall itself, and not as mere superficial applications."

COLORS FOR A GLOBE.

SIR: I have been constructing a geographical globe, and I come to you for a little advice in the selection of colors. I wish to use permanent transparent colors in washes. How are the aniline colors for this purpose, or the dye woods and extracts?

J. H. D., Brooklyn, N. Y.

ANSWER.—You cannot do better than to use Winsor & Newton's water-colors. The aniline colors should be avoided, as they will quickly fade.

A TYRO ENLIGHTENED.

SIR: I have the enclosed list of French water-colors, and being but a tyro in the use of them find it very difficult to follow instructions under their present names. Would you be so kind as to translate them for me that I may be better enabled to understand them?

J. H. P., Pittsburgh, Pa.

ANSWER.—Jaune de chrome clair, light chrome yellow; outremer, ultramarine; vert vegetal, vegetable green; blanc d'argent, silver white; jaune d'or, golden yellow; jaune de chrome foncé, deep chrome yellow; pourpre clair-extra, very light purple; violet clair-extra, very light violet; ombre naturelle, raw umber; Sienna brulée, burnt Sienna; bleu de Prusse, Prussian blue; bleu celeste, celestial blue; gomme gutte, gamboge; carminée rose, rose lake; vermillon, vermillon.

"SCRATCH WORK" DECORATION FOR CHINA.

PUTOIS, Topeka, Kas.—The kind of work you speak of is much practised in Germany, where the objects may be bought colored all ready for the amateur to decorate. But any person with taste can do it, as it requires no especial study like china painting. The process is very simple, and can be easily managed at home, with the exception of the firing. It is thus described by a lady who has tried it: "A cup such as is usually sold for enamel painting will be found easy to begin with, over-glaze colors being used. The ordinary fat oil and turpentine will be found most satisfactory as a medium. Should the mixing of the colors prove an obstacle, let those prepared in tubes be selected, instead of powders. Rich tints are most effective, such as deep pink, blue, orange, or a dark and warm chocolate brown. Give the cup a good coating of the paint, covering the entire outside with the exception of the handle. Should the paint prove very slow in drying, it may be placed for a short time in a slightly warm oven. A second coating will often be found necessary. Until fired the surface will present a very rough appearance. When perfectly dry, with a very soft lead pencil lightly sketch any pattern fancy may dictate. A cup will look pretty with sprays of vine leaves and tendrils round the top, and under it, on the front or at one side, a monogram. If any difficulty be experienced in sketching the pattern evenly, it can easily be drawn on tissue or tracing paper, and fastened on the china over a piece of transfer paper. The latter can be quickly made by well rubbing one side of some unglazed note paper with a cake of ordinary black lead. While working, the cup is best held in a soft silk handkerchief, for warm fingers will sometimes leave ugly marks; also the breath will soften the paint, but with a little care no inconvenience will arise from this. With a sharp pointed penknife scratch away the paint within the lines of the design, transforming it into a wreath of white leaves with many lacelike tendrils, which will give it a light and pretty effect. Initials may be treated likewise. The paint will peel off in tiny shavings, and these can be blown away occasionally. Expert fingers, with a small brush and very thin paint of the same color as the groundwork, can add a slight shading to the leaves and flowers; otherwise the veins must simply be put in by a fine gilt crow quill. The one initial should be picked out by a little shading; the other also, after it has been grounded in gold. The handle

should be decorated in a similar manner. Hancock's preparation of gold will be found easy of manipulation for this purpose; also for finishing the veins, as described, in gold, not putting it on over the paint, but either leaving uncolored or scratching the surface white again. Unique breakfast and tea sets may be made thus, and those possessing a slight knowledge of drawing may produce the most beautiful etchings, the best implement to use for this purpose being a coarse darning needle. As a rule, etchings on medallions of color prove more effective than when the entire article is painted."

PASTEL PAINTING.

P. S. T., Cincinnati.—In order to obtain great decision and depth in draperies, architecture, or landscape, some artists employ a body of color made of pastel, mixed with bookbinders' varnish, thinned with spirits of wine. It is seldom, however, that this produces a good effect, as the touches put in with it do not harmonize with the other work; but the following composition will answer the intended purpose, and will leave no prominent and inharmonious brilliancy: Spirits of wine, 4 ounces; powdered white rosin, 1 dram; essential oil of spike (lavender), 1 dram, and camphor, 4 grains. This composition may be modified as follows: Rectified spirits of wine, 2 ounces; powdered white rosin, ½ dram; camphor, 4 grains, and oil of spike, 4 grains.

B. T., Brooklyn, N. Y.—In pastel painting (1) white, used either in the composition of the crayon, or in the execution of a picture, produces an endless series of tints, to which no names can be given. (2) Chalk and yellow ochre afford flesh tones in variety, according to the preponderance of the one or the other material. So do chalk and light red, chalk and vermillion, chalk and madder, or carmine.

S. A., Fort Scott, Kan.—Colored crayons, or pastels, are made by the mixture of color with a colorless base. This combination is then worked by means of a mucilage into the consistence of a soft paste, which, having been formed into small cylinders, and afterwards dried, the colors are ready for use. One of the best qualities of the crayon is that it should work smoothly and evenly, which supposes it entirely free from any gritty mixture. There are certain colors which become, in drying, too hard, and which in like manner indurate every composition into which they may enter. Some are susceptible of a cohesion more intimate with certain bases than with others. There are mucilages suitable only for particular colors, as communicating to others a degree of consistence either too great or insufficient. Thus, in their preparation, all colors cannot be treated alike. To succeed, therefore, in making crayons, there would be necessary an amount of skill that could be acquired only at an expense of time which no artist could afford. And after all his labors, his experience would but prove that the pastels which he manufactured were inferior to those which he could purchase.

THE ART OF THE MEDALLIST.

MR. REGINALD STUART POOLE, of the British Museum, recently delivered a course of three lectures upon coins and medals at University College, London, with a view to assisting Professor Legros, Director of the Slade School of Art, in an attempt he is making to revive the medallist's art.

Upon the obverse of a medal, except in rare instances, the lecturer observed, the head was represented. As to the treatment of the obverse, the Greeks and the Italians of the Renaissance represented entirely different schools. The Greek was idealistic; the Italian was scrupulously yet nobly realistic. The Roman artists occupied a middle position, and were not worthy of comparison with either. The familiar Greek head was, as it were, the head of heads; a noble ideal that embodied the quintessence of the real. It was a poor idealization and a cowardly realism that resulted from an attempt to elevate an isolated individual into a type. That was the attempt of the Roman medallists. Their work wanted true beauty when compared with the Greek. It wanted the great quality of sincerity which gives undying value to the portrait medals of the Renaissance. There were thus three great schools. They might work in either of two; the third was the one to avoid.

The art of the medallist—the sculptor in relief—occupied a middle position between sculpture and painting, being subject partly to the conditions which govern the sculptor, partly to those subject to which the painter works. It was curious to observe accordingly that the medallist's art tended to the sculptural in the greatest ages of sculpture, and to the picturesque in the palmiest days of painting. The three-quarter face was the one which best fitted the field of the medal, the circle enclosed it more gracefully than it did the face in profile, and it was less stiff than the full face. But this was a position which presented extreme difficulties to the sculptor on account of the variety of different planes which the work presented; and it was noticeable that it was only for a short period, in the greatest days of Greek art, that the face was so presented. The lecturer begged them to avoid in their work any mathematical perfection. The medal should not be perfectly circular, but only so near to circular as it might be if drawn with the hand. So in like manner the field of the medal should not be a perfect plane. The Greeks had avoided this distressing precision always. They made very commonly the medal slightly convex on its obverse, and concave on its reverse. So the head seemed to grow out of and belong to its environment. It lived, as it were, in an atmosphere, and did not look so miserably lonely as in modern struck medals it does.

The lines of the design upon the medal were of necessity hand-drawn, and these could only seem properly in harmony with a hand-drawn bounding line. A circle described with a compass proclaimed in a distressing manner the conflict between science and art.

As to the design upon the reverse of the medal it might be of various descriptions. It must, however, be simply composed, which was a condition dictated by the medium, and it must have some suitable subjective connection with its obverse. It should stand toward the obverse as the wife toward the husband, complete in herself and beautiful to view, yet seeming more beautiful still and attaining a higher perfection when the spiritual bond had been proclaimed and understood.

THE CHARCOAL CLUB.

A DOZEN active and ambitious artists have lately established in this city, under the name of the Charcoal Club, a society which promises to be one of the most practical and prosperous art organizations in the country. "Artistic improvement" and "social intercourse" are the special objects of this new club, the regular membership of which is limited to 21. The meetings are to be held every Tuesday evening, the first to be devoted to a public reception, the second to sketching, and the third and fourth to study from the life, this arrangement to be repeated in due rotation. The dues are \$10 initiation fee and \$2 a month. The club rooms are at 14 and 16 West Fourteenth Street. The members and officers are as follows: Frank Bellew, President; Vic. Arnold, Vice-President; Joseph F. Clare, Treasurer; Geo. R. Halm, Secretary; Marc Gambier, Alfred Trumble, Executive Committee; Chas. Volkmar, F. Rondel, Sr., E. R. Morse, A. Hosier, Geo. W. Carleton, Frank Bellew, Jr. The first public reception, held July 11, was numerously attended by artists and art lovers, Messrs. Elihu Vedder, Geo. W. Maynard, H. P. Share, Joseph Lauber, and Wm. E. Marshall being among the guests. Much creditable work done by the members was exhibited, including some spirited designs by Mr. Halm, and some fine plaques and vases by Mr. Volkmar.

THE COSTUME OF MEN.

At a meeting of the Architectural Association in London, a paper on "Art in Costume" was recently read by Mr. J. A. Gotch, in which he spoke of the costume of men, and made some suggestions. He said:

"One of the most obvious things about a man's every-day dress is its ugliness. When on pleasure he is bent he may wear pretty much what he likes; and, as a matter of fact, when footballing, boating, bicycling, cricketing, walking, or otherwise enjoying himself, he does adopt a dress which is both sensible and picturesque. It is only when he wishes to make an impression, when he is on business, or paying a call, or going to worship, or performing some conventionality, that he considers it absolutely necessary to be particularly inartistic and uncomfortable."

After condemning and ridiculing the "top hat" and the ordinary frock coat, Mr. Gotch went on to say that the worst and ugliest feature in modern costume was trousers, which seemed to have been evolved from the tight trousers and Wellingtons of the early part of the century; these, in their turn, having grown from the knee-breeches and stockings of fifty years earlier. History had no record of a garment at once so simple and so ugly.

"Trousers are not economical, inasmuch as they get baggy at the knee long before they are worn out; they are always getting dirty at the ankles. They are not specially adapted either for cold or for wet. On a wet day it is the part from the knee downward that catches the rain and necessitates changing the whole garment. Indeed, it is the way in which they ignore the knee-joint which renders trousers practically so objectionable. The substitution of knickerbockers or knee-breeches for trousers is one of the pressing reforms of the day—the change is so simple and yet so effectual. The next is the total disuse of the chimney-pot hat and the more frequent use of soft material as a head covering. A 'wide-awake' or 'billy-cock' hat has capabilities, while the 'Tam-o'-Shanter' is an excellent article, ready to the head."

Coats could not be so absolutely condemned, but the lecturer suggested some modifications:

"If the coat-sleeves were tight and the collar buttoned high there would be no necessity, scarcely a possibility, of starched shirt-front and cuffs, consequently no necessity for a shirt at all. What then? Is a linen shirt a sine qua non? Not at all. At present its only use lies in the collar, cuffs, and shirt-front appearing. Do away with the shirt-front and cuffs and you may then discard the shirt, only you must wear a thicker jersey. Suppose we adopted a regular seaman's jersey. Its collar might appear above the coat, its cuffs below the sleeves. Let it be any color you like, white or otherwise. Such a costume would certainly be more simple and artistic, and as for its oddity that is a mere matter of custom. We could then do without a waistcoat. The watch and other small articles might be carried in a band round the waist, the coat worn usually buttoned up, but if it were left open it would not display the same kind of dishabille as now; while a necktie would be optional, according to the cut of the jersey collar. If it were thought desirable to ornament the coat, it might well be done by making the necessary turning in of the edges ornamental. That was the system which the Greeks adopted. They ornamented the edges of their garments with a running pattern, and then, according to the way in which the garment was worn, this pattern varied in effect. We might adopt the same principle, though its application would be different. For summer a very practical and useful feature might be introduced by simply having short sleeves to the coat and showing the jersey down to the wrist; for in summer, as every one knows, thick, flapping sleeves are a great inconvenience. Open shirt-fronts for general wear are both inelegant and unhealthy. What is the good of wearing an open front in order to put a chest-protector underneath it? A little care bestowed upon the collar and necktie will well repay the trouble, for that is the focus of male costume—the place where the eye naturally lights in conversation, and a small piece of bright color is very 'precious' in these days of sombre hues."

The author of the paper thought there was much room for improvement and attention in the colors of our clothes. Of all the horrible inventions of feeble clothmakers the shepherd's plaid pattern was, he said, the most dreary. A man dressed in a black coat, shepherd's plaid trousers, and a nondescript artificial necktie, was a sight to rouse pity in his bitterest foe. Black was much too freely used nowadays, though rather less than formerly. There was no reason for it, except a desire to be in the fashion. The lecturer said: